



EHN Sunday: Oil refineries are a risky business; Venezuela refinery death toll reaches 39.
AboveTheFold to: Ellen Schmitt

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Oil refineries are a risky business. Refinery oversight is riddled with gaps, according to a San Francisco Chronicle investigation launched after the Aug. 6 fire that destroyed part of Chevron's Richmond plant and sent thousands of residents to hospital emergency rooms. [San Francisco Chronicle](http://www.sfgate.com/nation/article/Oil-refineries-a-risky-business-3815770.php), California.
<http://www.sfgate.com/nation/article/Oil-refineries-a-risky-business-3815770.php>

Refinery blast kills 39 in Venezuela, dozens hurt. A huge explosion rocked Venezuela's biggest oil refinery and unleashed a ferocious fire on Saturday, killing at least 39 people and injuring more than 80 others in one of the deadliest disasters ever to hit the country's key oil industry. [Associated Press](http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Refinery-blast-kills-39-in-Venezuela-dozens-hurt-3815514.php)
<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Refinery-blast-kills-39-in-Venezuela-dozens-hurt-3815514.php>

Tropical storm hits Haiti, leaving several dead. Tropical Storm Isaac whirled across Haiti on Saturday, delivering strong winds and rain that caused flooding, mudslides and at least a few deaths, according to preliminary reports, but not the kind of widespread destruction feared in the earthquake-battered nation. [New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/26/world/americas/storm-leaves-several-dead-in-haiti.html?ref=world) [Registration Required]
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/26/world/americas/storm-leaves-several-dead-in-haiti.html?ref=world>

A river of oil runs through small Minnesota town. Minnesota, a land of no oil wells, is quietly emerging as a major gateway for the oil bounty flowing from North Dakota and Canada. Pipelines that can carry 14 percent of the petroleum used in United States converge on Clearbrook in northwest Minnesota, population 521. [Minneapolis Star Tribune](http://www.startribune.com/local/167441665.html), Minnesota.
<http://www.startribune.com/local/167441665.html>

Long fight over fracking still divides Pennsylvania town. More than three years after residents in Dimock, Pa., complained that Marcellus Shale natural gas development polluted their private water wells, the lawsuits are getting settled, the activists are going away, and gas drilling is set to resume. [Philadelphia Inquirer](http://www.philly.com/philly/business/20120826_Long_fight_over_fracking_still_divides_Pa_town.html), Pennsylvania. [Registration Required]
http://www.philly.com/philly/business/20120826_Long_fight_over_fracking_still_divides_Pa_town.html

Industrial water in high demand in North Dakota. The oil boom's thirst for "fracking" fluids fuels a thriving market for water that has become an industry with yearly sales estimated at between \$45 million to \$120 million. [Fargo Inforum](http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/372212/group/News/), North Dakota.
<http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/372212/group/News/>

Who determines safety of new food ingredients? Grocery shoppers examining colorful packages bearing long lists of hard-to-pronounce ingredients might take comfort in the belief that those substances were deemed safe by the government. They might also believe that some federal agency must, at least, be notified when a new substance enters the U.S. food supply. [Chicago Tribune](http://www.chicagotribune.com/health/ct-met-food-ingredients-20120825,0,4074938,full.story), Illinois.
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/health/ct-met-food-ingredients-20120825,0,4074938,full.story>

A high-tech hunt for Asian carp in Great Lakes yields conflicting evidence. More than \$100 million has been spent in a battle to keep Asian carp from invading the Great Lakes. The federal government says it is winning. But some DNA evidence shows that Asian carp may have already breached the barriers. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/fish-barrier-vs-carp-dna-what-to-believe-4q5ru75-167454795.html), Wisconsin.
<http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/fish-barrier-vs-carp-dna-what-to-believe-4q5ru75-167454795.html>

Port of Tacoma, industry have eyes on a clean future. Three decades ago, Tacoma Tideflats industries in Washington state emitted a witch's brew of foul-smelling and health-threatening pollutants. That's no longer the case, thanks to a dedicated cleanup effort and economic changes that eliminated the biggest sources of pollution. [Bellingham Herald](http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2012/08/26/2662746/environmental-experiments-port.html), Washington.
<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2012/08/26/2662746/environmental-experiments-port.html>

Alaska, concerned about gold miners' health, to test them for mercury. Alaska health officials, concerned about amateur miners seeking riches in a modern-day mini gold rush, plan to test prospectors in the town of Nome for mercury exposure for fear that archaic mining techniques may be inadvertently harming their bodies. [Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/25/usa-alaska-miners-idUSL2E8JO05220120825)
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/25/usa-alaska-miners-idUSL2E8JO05220120825>

Beyond wild rice: When sulfate goes up, so do mercury, phosphates. Even if scientists, regulators, politicians and industry leaders find common ground on how much sulfate is too much for wild rice, the issue of sulfate in Minnesota waterways isn't going away. [Duluth News Tribune](http://www.duluthnewstribune.com/event/article/id/241128/), Minnesota.
<http://www.duluthnewstribune.com/event/article/id/241128/>

Residents ponder effects of mobile phone towers. A new legal challenge in India calling for the ban on construction of mobile phone towers on residential buildings is resonating with residents in Dubai who live near or under towers emitting electromagnetic radiation. [Dubai Gulf News](http://www.dubai-gulfnews.com), United Arab Emirates.

US maritime agency considers overhaul of oil-spill regulation. The United States is to consider scrapping one of the most significant pieces of international safety-at-sea regulations, introduced to prevent catastrophic oil spills. Abu Dhabi National, United Arab Emirates.
<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/industry-insights/shipping/us-maritime-agency-considers-overhaul-of-oil-spill-regulation>

Can we rely on our power grid? As the eastern United States struggles to recover from yet another weather shock, energy officials are acknowledging climate change as a force that finally has to be reckoned with — even as concern grows over other threats that can set off catastrophic blackouts. Asbury Park Press, New Jersey.
<http://www.app.com/article/20120826/NJNEWS/308260012/Can-we-rely-on-our-power-grid->

Geoengineering: Risks and benefits. Few issues arouse as much controversy in environmental circles these days as geoengineering - "technical fixes" to tackle climate change, by sucking carbon dioxide from the air or by reducing the amount of sunlight hitting the Earth. BBC
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19371833>

Populations bracing for arrival of 2 typhoons. Typhoon Bolaven is expected to enter the East China Sea today, bringing gales to eastern coastal areas, the meteorological authority forecast yesterday. Bolaven, the 15th tropical storm of the year is expected to upgrade further to a super typhoon and enter the East China Sea tonight. Xinhua News Agency, China.
<http://www.shanghaidaily.com/nsp/National/2012/08/26/Populations%2Bbracing%2Bfor%2Barrival%2Bof%2B2%2Btyphoons/>

Research paints a complex picture of Haiti cholera outbreak. When cholera broke out in Haiti two years ago, killing more than 7,000 researchers traced its origin to United Nations peacekeepers from Nepal. Now researchers have shown that a second cholera strain also sickened some Haitians. Baltimore Sun, Maryland.
<http://www.baltimoresun.com/health/maryland-health/bs-hs-haiti-cholera-research-20120824,0,6284541.story>

Ministry to amend law to bury nuclear waste without reprocessing. Japan officials plan to amend legislation to allow for "direct disposal" of spent nuclear fuel, a move away from the nation's problem-plagued goal of creating a full nuclear fuel cycle. Instead of recycling all spent fuel, some of it would be buried deep in the ground. Asahi Shimbun, Japan.
<http://ajw.asahi.com/article/0311disaster/fukushima/AJ201208250071>

More than 3,000 seek legal action following Chevron Richmond fire. An Oakland-based attorney says he has more than 3,000 signed-on seeking legal action against Chevron stemming from a fire at the oil company's local refinery on Aug. 6. Contra Costa Times, California.
http://www.contracostatimes.com/news/ci_21400410/more-than-3-000-seek-legal-action-following

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